1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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In the houses of the higher as well as of lesser nobility I found the practice of divorcing ageing wives and replacing them with more attractive girls. The ex-wife, especially if she had borne children, would be allowed to stay on in the house and would continue to be supported by the husband, or ex-husband—a wife on pension, as it were. The late *Etsu* of Agaie was partial to a different method: he used to marry off his 'pensioned' wives, at very low bride-price, to *talakaži* and peasants, who were either glad to find a 'cheap' wife or else afraid to refuse so exalted a gift. Among the upper classes of Bida old men, long past marrying age, would still add young girls to the number of their 'wives'. Aphrodisiacs (which one can buy from the barber-doctors in Bida) and stimulants (above all, kola-nuts) keep alive their sexual appetite. Old S., who died in 1935, 70 years old, had married a new young wife only the previous year, and a son was born to him ('to him' at least in the legal sense) posthumously.

This classbound polygamy deeply affects the sex morality of the women and, indirectly, of the society at large. Respect for chastity and the sanctity of matrimonial ties dominates the traditional moral concepts of Nupe. But this 'double morality' of a social system which legitimizes unrestricted sexual desire of the men in one privileged stratum, but would force similar desires in other strata into the realm of illegitimate and indictable action, is in danger of defeating itself. In Bida it has clearly provided a strong stimulus to extra-marital sex relations in all classes. Moreover, the starved sexuality of the women in the large polygamous households strives to find an outlet.[1] The insecurity of their legal position tends to remove the barriers of conventional matrimonial morality. Thus many of the younger wives or concubines seek satisfaction in illegitimate relationships and even semi-professional prostitution.

Adultery, including adultery in this extreme form of semi-professional prostitution, is extremely widespread among women of every status. Prostitution in the strict sense (practised as a profession and in brothels) does not occur in Bida. But we have heard that the kola-nut vendors on Bida night-market, all married women, are prostitutes at the same time.[2] We shall learn later of the close association between women's trade and prostitution (and the large majority of Bida women are traders of one kind or another). 'Every woman', an informant told me, 'whom you see beautifully dressed in the streets of Bida after dark, is a "bad" woman.' Informants, themselves married men, were all agreed that there were hardly any 'good' women left in Bida. But when I asked them what the husbands were doing about this they said: 'Nothing; what could we do?' Indeed, they can do little but shut their eyes. The obvious alternative, divorce, is impossible in most cases. Poor men cannot afford to divorce their wives, for this would mean forfeiting part of the bride-price and thus their only chance of finding another wife; moreover, the economic dependence of many husbands on their wives (of which we shall hear more in a later chapter) forbids such a course.

[1] In the royal 'harems' homosexual practices—called *madigo* or *lutu* (the Arabic word for homosexuality)—are, in fact, said to occur.

[2] Their 'tariff' is commonly known: it varies between 6*d*. and 1*s*.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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 796x

risk of divorce or even of their husbands' serious anger. The ritual alone seriously and publicly brands immorality or subjects barren women to a 'cure' which is indistinguishable from punishment. 182 183 842

Thirdly, the hectic mood of the *gunnu* dance is a model 'in reverse'. For this kind of abandoned behaviour is never permitted or thought of in ordinary life, and any open reference to sex is severely shunned by the rather prudish Nupe. Sex and privacy go together; and no ordinary dance permits a mingling of the sexes. Indeed, in all ordinary dances and in most ceremonial ones the whole mood is one of calm and restraint. Perhaps, then, we may call the *gunnu* (and one or two similar ceremonials) a safety-valve, a licensed compensation for otherwise rigid self-control; certainly, it puts a premium on a mode of behaviour otherwise not only improper but unthinkable. 796x 182 183 834 786

The final instance, again taken from the *gunnu*, is of a slightly different order. I am referring to the masquerading of the boys as girls. 'Masquerading' is possibly too strong a word, for all that happens is that the boys wear a piece of woman's cloth.[1] But this aspect of the *gunnu* dress is always specifically mentioned, and in the general dance the boys are encouraged to imitate and caricature female steps and mannerisms. Now in 'real' life boys or men are never expected to behave like the opposite sex. From the time when children put on any dress at all (when they are about six or seven), they are dressed differently. As soon as the boys form themselves into the earliest age grade (at the age of eight or nine), the occupations, interests, and codes of conduct of the sexes differ sharply, and this is true also of songs, dances, and pastimes of all kinds. Male homosexuality, which would blur this dividing line, is severely condemned and, in fact, denied to occur. The exceptional behaviour at the *gunnu* thus appears to have a symbolic significance (though it is not stated more explicitly), the temporary change of roles pointing to a more permanent one. The boys who are admitted to the *gunnu* are on the threshold of manhood, the very admission to the ritual being a first token of the new status. Before that they were something else—children, still looked after by their mothers as much as by their fathers, and being with women more often than with men. Later, this ambiguous position will come to an end, which change roughly coincides with admission to the *gunnu*. The symbolic identification with the female sex on that occasion thus emphasizes the transition through concentrating it into something like 'a last time' when boys can be confused with girls. It is not literally a 'last time'; for even before this event boys did not walk about dressed like girls or behaved 796x 182 183 881 [839] [838]

[1] In the *gani* ceremonial, to be described later, this 'masquerading' is much more elaborate and definite (see below, p. 218).

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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To substantiate this hypothesis I may be allowed to digress a little. It is, I think, true to say that man surrenders to woman his virility in the sex-act and his independence and self-containedness in the love relationship; the fulfilment of his desires is thus bought with the sacrifice of Ego-completeness. If we take this sacrifice to be unconsciously hateful, as I think we must, and accept this ambivalence of love-hatred as the source of an inescapable antagonism having no normal or legitimate outlet, then the belief in female witches (of the Nupe or any other people) represents a 'displacement' and licensed expression of the repressed hatred. The phrase 'having no normal outlet' requires some comment. Different cultures fashion the normal social relationship between the sexes in widely diverse ways, as has been amply demonstrated in the work of Margaret Mead. But few societies can by this means fully resolve the conflict of sex antagonism. If the society makes the men the socially dominant sex, it is able to compensate for the surrender of virility but fails to express the importance of the woman as sexual partner and procreatrix, and hence invites male fears of female revenge; and if the social dominance of men is reduced, either by design (as in some societies) or in consequence of uncontrollable social processes (as in Nupe), this produces the kind of situation we have been discussing. There is some evidence that a carefully balanced relationship between the sexes can avoid this impasse.[1] But where it does not, the psychological mechanism of projection, with its offer of vicarious or fantasy hatreds, comes into play.

Now this is only a bare formula, couched in terms of universal validity. Let me fill it in with details from Nupe society. To begin with, the 'surrender' and loss of 'completeness' on the part of the men may be felt more strongly in some societies than in others, that is, reach consciousness to a different degree. The Nupe men, certainly, make much of the physically weakening effects of sexual intercourse, and teach the younger generation to husband their strength; they also, as we know, readily employ aphrodisiacs and so betray their fear of the loss of potency. At the same time, they will comment on the sexual voraciousness of the women, who never seem to have enough lovers. The Nupe, incidentally, do not conceive of erotic relationships that could avoid this threat to their virility: homosexuality among the men does not seem to occur and is thought absurd as well as repulsive. Yet again, homosexuality does occur among the women, which fact is well known to the men.[2] For the Nupe, then, the woman is more 'complete'

[1] See my chapter on 'Dual Descent in the Nuba Hills', in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, ed. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, 1950, pp. 354 ff.
[2] See *A Black Byzantium*, p. 152.